

I may now go on to consider some specific problems of the early education of children, and in particular those arising from the facts of their sexual development.

The problems I shall consider are those constantly put to me during the last few years, by mothers, nurses or nursery school teachers, problems that may arise any day in any nursery or nursery school. I shall include one or two (e.g. feeding and weaning) which belong in the first instance to the earliest days of infancy, and thus do not as such lie within the main scope of this volume. They have their reverberations in the nursery school period, however, and serve to emphasise my main thesis of the continuity of personal and social development; and they have practical bearings on the later work of the nursery school teacher.

i. FEEDING AND WEANING

It will be clear, both from the actual data I have brought together and from the interpretative theory, that the child's oral experiences are fraught with considerable consequences to his mental life.

A certain amount of frustration with regard to oral pleasures is quite inevitable. The child cannot, either at this or any other time of his life, be kept in a continual state of complete satisfaction. Even where his feeding times are regular and the supply of milk satisfactory he is bound to experience an interval of hunger and longing for love, between the periods of actual satisfaction. Such normal frustrations of desire are, however, the spur which carry his mental life on from the first primary identification with his mother and the helpless omnipotence of the suckling, to the first awareness of the external world, the first hold upon external reality, and the first organisation of the ego towards ordered responses. Through his hunger and his longing for love, he comes gradu-

ally to recognise the reality of the breast as
an external
object independent of himself, and, later on, to
know his
mother as a person, with all those manifold
activities Li which
she serves him.

Where this normal and inevitable frustration
is, however,
enhanced by difficulties in feeding, whether
this arises from
an inadequate supply of milk, the necessity for
bottle feeding,
or a general bad management which leaves the
child to long
or irregular periods of helpless hunger and
desire, serious